SOME

SHORT and PLAIN

DIRECTIONS

For the Spending of

One Day well;

BY

(If every Day carefully observed)

A Man may be much enabled,

(Through GOD's Grace)

TO SPEND

His whole LIFE well.

By the Author of *The Answer to all Excuses and Pretences for not coming to the* Holy Communion.

The SEVENTH EDITION.

ay without ceasing, 1 Thess. v. 17.
ep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life, Prov. iv. 23.

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The PREFACE.

ALtho' the Design of this little Book be not to instruct a Christian in the whole of his Duty, but only to furnish him with some few Directions, which may be of constant and daily use to him; yet I am very much inclined to think, that if once a Man brings himself (through the Grace of God) to a constant habit of observing the Rules which are here set down, he will find a religious and virtuous Life in all Points to be not only so easy, but delightful also, as never to break off the Course of it while he has any time to live.

As, therefore, I would earnestly perswade every man by reading and hearing of the holy Scriptures, and other religious Books and Discourses, to endeavour to get a full and comprehensive knowledge of his Duty in all its branches, so will I venture in a particular manner to recommend the following Directions to him, beseeching him daily and hourly to weigh and consider them, and to have his Thoughts almost continually upon them, until he renders them familiar both to his memory and practice.

And if he be a Parent, I would not only put him in mind of setting a good and virtuous Example before his Children, but also desire him to make a trial of their getting by heart all the short Prayers and Ejaculations hereafter set down, and often examine them what they are to say at their going to Bed, at their first awaking, at their putting on their Cloaths, *&c. that by this means Virtue and true Piety may take firm hold of them, before they come to be exposed to the Temptations of the World.*

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For the ſpending of One Day well, &c.

1. HAVING over Night reſolved to ſpend the next Day as an honeſt Man, and a good Chriſtian ought to do, a little before you betake yourſelf to your Reſt, ſay the following ſhort Prayer, not haſtily and confuſedly (as the Cuſtom is with many when they addreſs themſelves to God) but carefully, attentively, and with all the Deliberation that may be.

O Lord God, make me, I beſeech thee, truly penitent for all my Sins paſt; careful and watchful againſt them for the time to come, and unfeignedly thankful for all the Mercies and Bleſſings which thou haſt vouchſafed unto me in the whole courſe of my Life. Pardon whatever I have done amiſs, for the ſake of Chriſt Jeſus, *who died for me; and give me the Grace and Aſſiſtance of thy Holy Spirit, that I may be enabled to ſpend the whole remainder of my Life in a true and faithful Obedience to thy Laws. At this time particularly I beſeech thee, O Lord, to grant me ſuch reſt and refreſhment this Night, as may help to fit and prepare me to ſpend the enſuing Day, as I have reſolved, in thy fear and ſervice. All which I beg of thine in-*

finite Mercy, for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt *our bleſſed Lord and Saviour.* Amen.

And then as you are undreſſing yourſelf, going into your Bed, and ſettling to ſleep, think with yourſelf, that as you now put off your Cloaths and lay yourſelf down in your Bed to reſt; ſo within a few Days, the time ſhall certainly come when your Body ſhall be wrapt in a winding-ſheet and laid in the Grave: Upon which occaſion, ſay after this or the like manner: *Good God, give me thy Grace, I beſeech thee, that I may ever be mindful of thy Death, and always prepared for it. And whenever my Soul ſhall depart from my Body, O receive it into Bliſs and Happineſs. And as I hope through thy Mercy, that when this Night is ended, I ſhall riſe from my Bed in health to do thee ſervice; ſo grant that, at the laſt Day, my Body may be raiſed from the Grave, and re-united to my Soul, that I may dwell with thee, and praiſe thee to all Eternity; through* Jeſus Chriſt *our Lord.* Amen.

2. As often as you ſhall happen to awake in the Night, call God into your Thoughts; and lift up your Heart to him in ſome ſhort Ejaculation: As *Lord, bleſs and protect me the remainder of this Night and forevermore; O thou who never ſleepeſt, watch over me who am unable without thee to help myſelf.* And then compoſe yourſelf quietly to ſleep again.

3. When the Morning comes, ſuffer not the World, nor any thing which belongs to it, to take Poſſeſſion of your Thoughts, until you have dedicated yourſelf unto Almighty God: Which do in theſe or the like Words, as ſoon as you are well awake: *O God, I thank thee that thou haſt not ſhut me up this Night in perpetual Darkneſs; but haſt of thy Goodneſs added one Day more to my Life. O grant that I may ſo employ both this, and all the reſt of my Days in thy Service, that in the end I may be a Par-*

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aker of Life everlasting; through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ *our Lord*

4. Lye no longer in your Bed than is proper and necessary for your moderate Refreshment; nor waste any part of your precious time in Idleness: But rise as soon as conveniently you can; and put yourself in a posture for the necessary and useful business of the day. And as you first begin to raise yourself, say these or the like Words: *Lord, as I now arise from my bed in health of body (blessed be thy holy name for it) so grant me thy Grace to spend my time here in such a manner, as at the last day I may obtain a joyful Resurrection to everlasting Life,* thro' Jesus Christ *our Lord.*

5. As you are dressing yourself say, *Lord, as I cover my Body with these Garments, that my nakedness may not be exposed to the eyes of the World; so give me thy Grace that my Soul may be cloathed with Righteousness, that sin may not expose me to eternal shame and punishment at the last great Day,* for Jesus Christ *his sake.*

6. And if you are putting on any thing by way of Ornament, say thus: *Lord, if cleansing and adorning my Body would render me as comely and acceptable in thy sight, as such things commonly do in the eyes of the World; what care and pains would I take that no spot, nor any indecency should appear about me? but alas! what trifles are these things to thee?* Poor Lazarus *was cloathed in rags, and his Body all loathsome and deformed with sores,* Luk. xvi. 20. *yet his Soul was beautiful, and adorned with piety; and that made him acceptable to thee, when at the same time the rich man, with all his pure and fine linen, was utterly rejected. Whatever sort of apparel my Body is cloathed with, O let not my Soul want the wedding Garment of true holiness, that I be not for ever cast out from thy presence,* for Jesus Christ *his sake.*

7. As ſoon as you are dreſt, retire yourſelf to your Cloſet, if you have one; or elſe to a Garden, Field, or ſome private corner of the Houſe. And if you are Maſter of your own leiſure, or if it be the Lord's Day, that you are free from other Buſineſs; ſpend ſome time in reading attentively ſome part, either of the holy Scriptures, or of ſome other good Book, which may help to teach and ſtir you up to your Duty: And when you have done, addreſs yourſelf to God in Prayer. For your direction wherein, there are ſo many excellent Forms already publiſh'd in divers Books of Piety and Devotion, that it is needleſs to ſet down one here at large. But let your buſineſs be what it will, and never ſo urgent, yet do not any day enter upon it before you have offered up your Devotions to Almighty God, at leaſt in ſuch a ſhort Form as this: *Bleſſed Lord! I return thee humble and hearty thanks for all the Mercies and Bleſſings, both ſpiritual and temporal, which thou haſt vouchſafed to me, and to all men; I acknowledge myſelf to have been a great ſinner, and therefore to be unworthy of all thy favours. But, Lord, give me Grace to repent; and pardon all my ſins, for the ſake of* Jeſus Chriſt, *who died for the ſins of the whole world. For whoſe ſake alſo, I beſeech thee to give both to me and all men, all ſuch things as thou ſeeſt to be neceſſary both for our Souls and Bodies. Our Father which art in Heaven*, &c. And if the Place into which you are retired be ſecret from the ſight of all Men, offer up your Prayers to God on your Knees: But if it be not, you may pray as you ſtand, or as you walk, that you may not ſeem to deſire to be *ſeen of Men*, Mat. vi. 5. And if your Heart be truly devout and humble, your Prayer will be accepted, whatever Poſture your Body is in.

8. As for the Lord's Day; let it be your conſtant care to ſpend it always (as much as human Infirmity ſhall permit) in the Worſhip of God, both publick and

and private; in reading and hearing his holy Word, and ſuch good Books or Diſcourſes as are agreeable thereto; and works of Charity and Compaſſion to ſuch as are in diſtreſs or poverty: Avoiding not only all Sports and Paſtimes (as they are called) but alſo the giving or receiving of any Viſits, except ſuch as Charity and Chriſtianity do oblige you to. And altho' upon ſuch other Days, as by the Church are appointed to be kept holy, we may innocently take a greater liberty; yet even upon thoſe days alſo, according as we have leiſure for it, we ſhould not fail to ſpend ſomewhat more of our time in exerciſes of Piety and Religion, than what, it may be, our conſtant buſineſs will at other times permit us to do..

9. But my deſign, at preſent, is chiefly to direct you, how the common and ordinary Days of every Week are to be ſpent. To proceed therefore, As ſoon as you have performed your Morning Devotions, then ſet yourſelf to ſome honeſt buſineſs, whereby you may be the better enabled to do good, both to yourſelf and others: And, except your health do neceſſarily require it, never ſpend a whole Day (or very rarely) in what we call Recreation; and muchleſs in downright Idleneſs: Remembring that, at the laſt Day, you will be called to a ſtrict account how you have ſpent that precious time which was given you to do good, and to work out your Salvation. Now the Morning being allowed by all to be the beſt time for buſineſs, be ſure that you conſtantly (or generally at leaſt) thus employ it. And if you have no other neceſſary or uſeful buſineſs to engage you, betake yourſelf to the reading of ſome good Book, whereby you may improve your Underſtanding, and become both wiſer and better. And before you enter upon buſineſs each day, put up this ſhort Ejaculation: *Good God, be pleaſed ſo*

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to prevent and direct me by thy Grace, that I may follow my Calling and worldly Buſineſs honeſtly and uprightly, avoiding all cheating and lying, and all manner of deceit; and ſo endeavouring to make proviſion for myſelf and Family here, as that I may not forfeit that eternal proviſion which thou haſt made for me in Heaven, through Jeſus Chriſt *our Lord.*

10. When it is Noon, ſit down to your Meat, (except upon ſuch days as you think it proper to keep a Faſt) and never forget to crave God's Bleſſing upon your Food before you eat it; nor be aſhamed of ſo good a Practice, however with many it be grown out of faſhion. And take eſpecial care that you be not guilty of any Exceſs, either in eating or drinking; but *put a knife to thy throat*, that is curb and reſtrain thy deſires, *if thou be a man given to Appetite*, Prov. xxiii. 2. And when at any time you are to ſit down to a Feaſt, or to ſuch fare as is better than ordinary, whether it be eating or drinking, at home or abroad, beg privately of God to keep you from all Exceſs; uſing this or the like ſhort Form: O *Lord, teach me, I pray thee, in the midſt of Plenty to ſtudy and practiſe Temperance, that while I am refreſhing and ſupporting my frail Body, I may not deſtroy my precious and immortal Soul*; *thro'* Jeſus Chriſt *our Lord.* And this ſame Practice muſt be repeated in the Evening, if you eat any Supper, or take any Repaſt at that time.

11. When you have done your Meal, give thanks after Meat; and then privately to yourſelf, uſe this or the like ſhort Ejaculation: *Lord, as thou haſt been pleaſed to give me food for the ſuſtaining of my frail Body (for which I moſt humbly thank thee) ſo be thou pleaſed to afford me thy Grace, for the ſtrengthening and confirming my Soul in piety and virtue. And grant that both my body and ſoul may al-*

ways

ways be dedicated to thee, and employed in thy ſervice, and to thy glory; through Jeſus Chriſt *our Lord.*

12. Altho' the greateſt part of the Afternoon alſo ought to be ſpent in ſome honeſt buſineſs and employment, yet ſuch is the frailty of our nature, that ſometimes it is even neceſſary that we ſhould a little refreſh and divert ourſelves with what we commonly call *recreation;* under which I alſo comprehend chearful and innocent Converſation with our Neighbours.

13. Now when at any time you are going, for a while, to lay your buſineſs aſide, and thus to recreate yourſelf, lift up your thoughts before-hand to God, after this manner: *Lord, as thou haſt been pleaſed to allow me to refreſh my frail nature with a little innocent chearfulneſs; grant that I may always make uſe of this liberty with ſuch prudence and caution, as not to forfeit that everlaſting joy which I hope for in the world to come, for* Jeſus Chriſt *his ſake.*

14. Run not haſtily upon any ſort of Recreation: But firſt conſider whether it be innocent, and then be ſure you ſpend not too much time at it. He who ſpends that time in mere recreation, which may be employed in ſome uſeful buſineſs, moſt certainly waſtes it.

15. If at any time you recreate yourſelf by playing with others at any ſort of Game, be ſure never to play for ſo much as to be under any great concern whether you win or loſe. Where Men play for ſo much as to be eagerly concerned about it, I ſee no diverſion there can be in it, except it be the hope they have of winning, from thoſe who play or bet with them; which if it be not coveting that which is our Neighbour's, yet I am ſure comes very near it. And on the other ſide, if a Man loſes much, it is apt to betray him to anger and fretfulneſs; the Conſequences of which are never

never good, and ſometimes have proved very e
vil.

16. Endeavour to be always in good humour
but be upon your guard whenever you are incline
to be chearful or merry And tho' ſometime
may be fit to ſpeak haſtily; yet watch over you
ſelf, and ſtrive, if you can, never to be angry
For Mirth, if not carefully curbed and manage
will betray you to obſcenity and profaneneſs: An
Anger, always, more or leſs, diſturbs and hinde
the uſe of ones Reaſon; and makes a Man unc
pable, while it laſts, of acting up to the Rules
decency and prudence. And in order to the curb
ing and ſuppreſſing of all extravagant motions bo
of Mirth and Anger, let me recommend this o
Rule to you; That is to ſay, that you always, a
upon all occaſions, accuſtom yourſelf to ſpeak
a low voice. Bring yourſelf but once effect
ally and conſtantly to this practice, and you w
ſoon by experience find, that Mirth and Anger a
not ungovernable things. The conſequence
which will be ſuch a ſweet and ſatisfactory Cal
in your mind, as is not eaſily to be conceived b
any one that has not had experience of it.

17. And this puts me in mind of a moſt neceſſ
ry piece of Adviſe; in the obſervation of whic
you ought to be daily and hourly careful; name
to govern your Tongue well; that you may,
the Grace and Aſſiſtance of God, keep yourſ
innocent from that variety of ſin and ſcandal,
which this unruly Member is ſo often the occ
ſion. And therefore, whenever you are about
join in Company, and mix in Converſation wi
others, fail not beforehand to make this or the li
ſhort Prayer: *Lord, be thou pleaſed to ſet a wat
upon my mouth, and to keep the door of my lips, th
nothing may go out thence but what is decent and*

er, and every way becoming the mouth of a Chriſtian, nd one who expects to be called to account for every le word, at the great and dreadful Day of Judgment. nd accordingly, upon all occaſions, let your Diſ- ourſe be, Firſt, true and ſincere, and free from l lying and equivocation; Secondly, mild and haritable, avoiding all unneceſſary or bitter re- ections upon others, (whoſe Faults you ought ther to conceal than expoſe) and all reviling and pprobrious names or expreſſions; which ought ot to be given or uſed to the pooreſt Servant or nderling, *Matt.* v. 22. for whom *Chriſt* died, much as for the greateſt Men. And laſtly, Let our Diſcourſe be always agreeable to the Rules Piety, avoiding all profane, obſcene, and ſmut- Jeſts, all manner of Oaths or Curſes, or evil iſhes; and all mention of the name of God or *hriſt*, except it be with due honour and reſpect the Divine Majeſty.

18. Relieving the Poor, and giving of Alms, is duty more often and earneſtly preſs'd, perhaps, an any other throughout the holy Scripture. very day then, or at leaſt every week, be ſure you il not to lay aſide ſomething for charitable Uſes, a ſufficient proportion to the worldly ſubſtance at God has bleſt you with. And think often with urſelf after this manner: *God has been pleaſed ſo bleſs my Labour and Induſtry, that I have gained much, or ſo much, this Week, or this Month. Or od has provided for me by his good providence, that have ſo much a year coming in to me. Now how uch of this ought I to return, in works of Charity, to good God, to whom I am entirely beholden for the hole! O let me not be niggardly to the Poor, con- ering, that what is given to them, is lent to the ord,* Prov. xix. 17. *And accepted of by* Chriſt, *as it had been beſtowed upon himſelf,* Matt. xxv. 40.

And

And when you have thus ſet apart what you deſign for Charity, be careful to diſtribute it (not to every idle, or vagrant Beggar, but) to ſuch as you can find to be the trueſt Objects of Pity and Compaſſion.

19. Whatever buſineſs you have at any time been doing, whatever recreation you have been taking, or whatever Company you have been in; as ſoon as you have done, immediately look back, recollect the ſeveral Circumſtances of what is paſt; and ſeriouſly conſider whether or no you have miſbehaved yourſelf in any particular Inſtance; and if you have, then beg God's Pardon, and reſolve a-new, to be more careful hereafter upon the like occaſion. And always in the Evening, before you betake yourſelf to ſleep, be ſure in like manner to look back upon the Tranſactions of the whole day, giving God ſtill the Glory of what you have done well, and craving his forgiveneſs for what you have done amiſs; together with his Grace and Aſſiſtance, that you may do better for the time to come. And altho' ſometimes, in a Morning, buſineſs may ſo ſurprize you, as not to give you much time for your Devotion, yet at Night you may ſurely borrow a little time, even from your ſleep, to be beſtowed in private upon the ſervice of Almighty God: For the manner of doing which, I again refer you to ſome of thoſe excellent Books of Piety and Devotion, of which I have made mention *Sect.* 7. But if your buſineſs keeps you up never ſo late, or however tired you may be with the labour of the day, yet never ſettle yourſelf to ſleep, without ſeriouſly and devoutly ſaying ſome ſuch ſhort Prayer as that which I have there directed for the Morning; and then conclude with that ſame Prayer and Ejaculation; which I have ſet down *Sect.* 1. at the beginning of theſe Directions.

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